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UPON THE SUBSTITUTION OF OTHER LUMBER FOR BLACK WALNUT.

By FRANKLIN B. HOUGH.

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THE excellent qualities of the black walnut, together with the beauty of finish that may be given to it, have been long generally felt, acknowledged, and with many persons it may be thought quite impossible to replace it with any other. Indeed, so thoroughly has the public become educated to this idea, that some will prefer to pay prices much beyond what it brings in the market rather than do without it. But already prices admonish us that it is growing scarce, and the rates at which they have advanced in recent years render it proper to inquire as to what material can be substituted for it, for the manufacture of furniture and for inside furnishing.

As for color, we have absolutely nothing else that compares with it; the lumber that perhaps nearest approaches it is the black cherry, when it has acquired a darker tint by age. We have some woods that far surpass it in brilliancy of color and splendor of lustre when freshly cut, such as the Sumac and the Osage orange, but they are small, and for the most part too hard or too soft for any use in furniture, and some of them fade with exposure to the light. The mountain mahogany of the Rocky Mountains is excessively heavy and hard, and although it admits of a beautiful polish, and presents the finest shades of color, it is too scarce and too hard to work, to be of much use, even in regions where it grows.

We must become accustomed to lighter shades of color, and must accept a variety of shades as presented in the natural grain of the woods, in place of the uniformly dark brown of the walnut; and for this we have many species that deserve particular favor. The Butternut, the Chestnut, and the several kinds of Ash, but more particularly the *Black Ash*, are deserving of especial favor, as affording beautiful shades of color, when cut in planes parallel with the tangent, or rather a little obliquely, as to bring up a succession of the layers of annual growth. The derangement of these layers from the growing over of knots, or from some curve in the tree, will often be found to afford the finest combinations of that grain, and beauties which art could never imitate.

When lumber is cut to secure the greatest strength, the planes of section should be, as nearly as may be, across the layers of growth, but for panel work, and in other uses in which solidity is of less importance than beauty, the timber should be cut as above described. The Maples, the Birches, the Oaks, and many other of the hard woods, afford opportunities for selection in great variety, and among the Evergreens some of the Pines are worthy of especial notice. The Long-leaved Southern Pine (*Pinus Australis*), and the Short-leaved Yellow Pine (*Pinus Mitis*), in exceptional cases, present corrugations in the grain, caused by protuberances upon the trunk, that will compare with the finest of tropical woods in the beauty of their finish. Unfortunately, these instances are exceptional rather than common, being often found near the outside of trees that have otherwise a regular growth within.

The disturbance of the grain of wood, which causes the curls and shades of tint so much admired in the Maples, are, so far as is yet known, due to causes beyond our control. In the case of the Olive, the Poplar and some other trees, they are often caused by the growing-over of wounds where the tops have been cut off, and in the burls on the Walnut, Ash, and other trees, they appear to originate in many cases from an internal injury, at first covered up from the margins of the wound, and enlarged indefinitely by subsequent growth.

But although the production of these anomalous forms of wood may be impracticable if not impossible, it is worthy of inquiry as to whether we cannot secure with ease and certainty, and to any extent desired, some pleasing varieties in the grain, that would enlarge our resources in the way of ornamental work, and afford a product that in durability and finish would satisfy every demand.

In many kinds of wood that have been sawn into these plates, say a quarter of an inch or less in thickness, the texture can be softened by steaming, so that it will yield under pressure without breaking, and when dried and cooled in this position it will retain its place. Now, by placing sheets of plain-grained wood, such as Ash, that has been cut in planes tangent to the rings of growth, between plates that have a slight corrugation upon the surface, and that fit one another exactly, we should have these sheets of wood, when taken out of the press, with undulations and figures corresponding with the mould. When planed off, they would present a corresponding variety in the grain, as we find in the natural corrugations with trees that have an irregular surface, and for panels and the like, a material which, when strengthened by a backing, would be applicable to a great variety of uses in furniture and in inside finishing.

There is much to be said in favor of light-colored woods in contrast with the sombre shades of the black walnut, especially when the color, as is more usually the case, is not relieved by differences of tint in the grain. We consider the preference hitherto given to the latter, more the result of education than from any natural superiority in the material, or the perfection of finish that it will allow. Plans have been at various times proposed for imitating these natural colors by various processes of staining and impregnation, including that of the absorption of coloring materials by the circulation of sap in the living

tree, but in the end such woods are but, at the best, dyed stuff, and no trick of art can ever equal nature in shades of color, or compare with the beauties of the natural growth.

In view of the present and prospective value of the Black Walnut, and of other furniture woods, it is well worthy of inquiry as to whether their planting and cultivation is not, at the present time, one of the most inviting fields of enterprise for profitable investment. At the recent Forestry Congress, held at Montreal, it was stated, on excellent authority, that the Black Walnut is found to grow very well in the Province of Quebec, although not a native of that region. This being the case, it should thrive almost anywhere in the Northern, Middle and Western States, and, in fact, is now being grown with perfect success as an ornament tree, in very many regions where it was not found in the primitive forests. It may be true that the planters would never see the lumber that would be cut from these trees, but they would have the satisfaction of knowing that their lands were every year gaining in value from their growth, and that they could at all stages be sold for as much more money as this growth had given them. This gain in rate, expressed in percentage of cost, is in good soil much greater than that of money at present rates of interest, and is subject to fewer chances of accident. Finally, when the timber has come to maturity it will be sure to command a price that will repay all cost to the lucky owners, who, whether they be our children or the children of strangers, will not have occasion to reproach our memories with having wasted the heritage that nature had provided for us, and left the world the worse for our having lived in it.

A MODERN AND OLD-FASHIONED TEA ROOM.

By KATE KIRK.

"This craze about the sunflower is simply absurd," said Mrs. Ouldlimson. "When I was a girl they grew wild in the kitchen garden, but no one thought of admiring them. Had Oscar Wilde, like Lord Beaconsfield, selected the primrose for his favorite flower, one might commend his taste, but the bold, flaunting sunflower, possessing neither fragrance nor beauty—"

Here Mrs. Ouldlimson paused to mop her indignant countenance with a yellow silk handkerchief, the border of which was sentinelled with a stiff row of the obnoxious flowers.

"You are behind the age, grandmamma, and not in the least esthetic," observed Miss Newcomer, languidly. "Of course, you do not admire my apron, which is quite too artistic, one similar to it was exhibited in the rooms of the Art Exhibition. The foundation is fine crash; the sunflowers above the hem are done in Kensington stitch, and the edge is trimmed with lace. It certainly looks old-fashioned," concluded the young lady, adjusting a sunflower and lily in the folds of her Quaker neckerchief.

"Yes, as old-fashioned and as useful as yonder spinning-wheel, ornamented with blue ribbons."

"That is ancient enough, for it belonged to your mother," broke in Mrs. Middleman.

"Very true; but in her time such articles were not used to ornament luxuriously furnished apartments. In a like manner the pieces of china that appeared on my mother's table, or on the kitchen dresser, are suspended from the walls of this room as if to apprise visitors that appetites are out of date, and they have been transformed from the useful into the ornamental. The floor of the three-cornered cupboard, which also belonged to my mother, is occupied with a waste basket too dainty for use—"

"Expensive would be a better word," interrupted Mrs. Middleman. "The picture surrounding it is exquisite. The figures are painted on cloth, and the raised work is appliquéd and Kensington. On the shelf above is a real Sevre tea set, and the other articles are Japanese bric-a-brac. That curious looking affair on the next shelf is a genuine Chinese tea caddy—"

"And that distorted monster perched on the bracket is undoubtedly a perfect likeness of Confucius, or some ugly Heathen god," interpolated the old lady, sarcastically. "Will you inform me why those strips of matting are hung on the wall, instead of being on the floor?"

"Oh, grandmamma!" exclaimed Miss Newcomer, in a horrified tone, "they are bamboo panels. The fire screens, you will observe, match the wall ornaments. Examine them and you will admit you never saw anything more perfect than those owls perched upon the leafless branch. The two sitting close together appear quite satisfied with each other, and oblivious of the jealous scowl cast upon them by the poor old fellow left out in the cold. The painting is called, 'Two's Company.' The other screen represents Mrs. Owl sitting up for her husband; the ruffled feathers around her head resemble the frill of an old woman's night-cap; her contemptuous, angry expression implies utter

disbelief in the statement volunteered by Mr. Owl, that his dissipated, jaded air is due to a recent attack of malaria. The frames are ebonized wood and gilt, and, grandmamma, the little mirror between the doors cost a small fortune, did it not, Aunt? The painting on the glass frame is a perfect marvel of handiwork, and the peacock plumes suspended above it are quite too graceful."

"This is what you call a modern tea-room," observed the old lady, taking a general survey of the apartment.

"Yes, grandmamma, this is our tea-room. It will not be used much until the fashionable season begins, then Aunt intends having five o'clock tea served here. I am making this cover for the bamboo tray we will use on such occasions. The material is gray Java canvas. In the centre is a sunflower done in Kensington, and the flat embroidery stitch; when that was finished I counted ten threads of the canvas, which was coarse, then drew out ten, until I reached the edge, which I fringed. The first open space is filled up by darning in, with ingrain cotton, the same number of threads as were drawn out. The solid space is ornamented with small sunflowers done the same as the centre one. The next open space is done by sewing, or knotting every ten threads together in the middle, which, as you will observe, forms a diamond-shaped figure; then the diamond is filled in with the ingrain and yellow cotton, in the same manner exactly as you darn a stocking. The two kinds of cotton are also knotted into the fringed edge."

Mrs. Ouldlimson remained thoughtfully silent for a moment, then said:

"And this is what you call cultivating a taste for the beautiful—"

"Art culture," interpolated Mrs. Middleman.

"I see an incongruous collection of modern and antique furniture," continued Mrs. Ouldlimson, "such as Turkish rugs and wicker chairs; a pine cupboard and an inlaid cabinet; and a superfluity of ornaments, one article destroying the effect of the other."

"We are only amateurs in esthetics as yet," pleaded Mrs. Middleman, "but this room was modelled after Mrs. Rouleau's, where everything is said to be unique and perfect in taste."

"You must remember, Aunt, the drapery in her room is Turcoman, with appliquéd plush bands, and the furniture is upholstered to match; naturally the effect is much more elegant than when cretonne is used."

"I wish I could give you a satisfactory description of my mother's old-fashioned tea-room," said Mrs. Ouldlimson. "It was called by that name, because the table for our evening meal was always laid there, but when without company, we used it for a sitting-room, as well. How well I remember the heavy rafters and wainscoting, the small many-paned windows, with deep recesses, in which flowers bloomed all the year. The broad, open fireplace, the high brass fender and fire dogs, upon which great logs of wood were piled in Winter, and fresh, green branches in Summer; the wooden mantel-piece, upon which quaint designs had been carved by hand. A massive door, opening in the middle, from whence, in Summer time, you caught sight of the tall sunflowers, bowing their golden heads to the soft wind. The bare floor, covered here and there with mats made by my mother and grandmother. Yonder cupboard stood in a corner, and in it was kept the china used on grand occasions. An old piece of furniture, mahogany I think it was, combining a bookcase, secretary and chest of drawers, was placed between the windows, and a ponderous table with lion-claw feet occupied the centre of the room. A clock, nearly reaching to the rafters, stood on the floor opposite the fireplace. Then there was a curious-looking sofa studded with brass nails, and several stiff, high-backed chairs. My father's chair, of some kind of dark, or perhaps stained wood, had a high carved back and broad arm rests. The feather cushion and head rest were made of chintz. My rush-bottomed chair was a diminutive copy of my mother's sewing chair. A couple of homemade stools covered with chintz stood near the fireplace. At night, when there was a roaring fire on the hearth, and the candles in the bright brass candlesticks were lighted, my mother, seated at her spinning-wheel, and my father dozing over a book, the room looked wonderfully homelike and cheerful. The bric-a-brac consisted of a pair of dark blue china vases filled with dried grasses, and a framed copy of the Declaration of Independence. There may have been some smaller articles, but these are all I remember."

"I am sorry you do not admire our tea-room, grandmamma, and hope you will be better pleased with the drawing room, which we are having refurnished in what I, at least, consider exquisite style," said Miss Newcomer, giving the old lady an esthetic embrace.